

REMARKS

The last Official Action in the above-identified application has been carefully considered. The Examiner's indication that claims 2, 5, 7-9, 11, 14 and 16-18 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form is greatly appreciated. This amendment has been presented to place this application in condition for allowance. Accordingly, reexamination and reconsideration of this application are respectfully requested.

By this amendment, claims 2, 7, 9, 11, 16, and 18 have been amended. Claims 1, 3, 4, 6, 10, 12, 13, and 15 have been cancelled without prejudice to their subsequent prosecution in any continuing application or disclaimer of any of the proprietary rights set forth therein. Claims 2, 5, 7-9, 11, 14, and 16-18 remain pending in this application.

In the Official Action, claims 1, 3, 4, 6, 10, 12, 13 and 15 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Takahashi et al. Claims 1, 3, 4, 6, 10, 12, 13 and 15 have been cancelled. Accordingly, the rejection is moot.

As aforementioned, the Examiner has indicated that claims 2, 5, 7-9, 11, 14 and 16-18 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Pursuant thereto and in order to expedite allowance of this application, independent claim 2 now incorporates the features of originally-filed claims 1 and 2. Claims 5 and 8 are ultimately dependent upon claim 2. Claim 7 is now in independent form and includes the features of originally-filed claims 1 and 7. Claim 9 is now in independent form and includes the features of claims 1, 3 and 9. Independent claim 11 now incorporates the features of originally-filed claims 10 and 11. Claims 14 and 17 are ultimately dependent upon claim 11. Claim 16 has been rewritten in independent form and includes the features of previously presented claims 10 and 16. Claim 18 has been rewritten in independent form and includes the features of previously presented claims 10, 12 and 18. Based

upon the Examiner's comments of the allowable nature of these claims, it is believed that claims 2, 5, 7-9, 11, 14, and 16-18 are in condition for allowance.

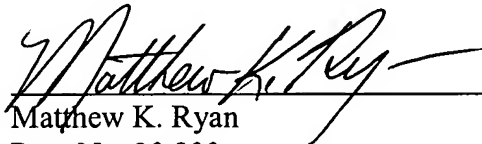
In view of the foregoing amendment and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the application as now presented is in condition for allowance. Early and favorable reconsideration of the application are respectfully requested.

An additional fee of \$258.00 is deemed to be required for the additional independent claims presented by this amendment, but if such is, please charge it, for this application, to Deposit Account No. 50-0320.

A Notice of Allowance is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,
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*Missing p. 2 of
Amend. filed 12/18/03*